

## **Games We Love to Play: 5 Ideas to Promote Leadership**

All band students know that they are part of a team and although this is generally a good thing, we also know that some teams skyrocket to greatness while others struggle continuously. One of the primary reasons that successful programs continue to flourish year after year is because of their shared values which also provide a unique team identity. This is true in sports, in business and of course, in band.

A renowned cadre of educators has provided fun and meaningful games and activities which enhance student leadership as well as work to define those values from within the team itself. In each case, the personal growth of the student and the process of adding value to another serve as the pinnacle priorities. These esteemed educators understand that shared values influence and guide the team's behavior in the same way that their personal values guide their individual behavior.

**I. Games to Get Them Moving/Ice-breakers** from Daniel Berard, Director of Bands, Grain Valley High School, Grain Valley, MO. Yamaha Master Educator.

***See, Run, Do*** develops teamwork and communication skills in a high-energy game. It can be done in any multiple of three (3) per team. The “seer” looks at a picture then describes the picture to the “runner.” The runner then runs to the “doer” (in another room or separated from the seer) and describes the picture to the “doer” who then tries to re-draw the picture as accurately as possible.

<https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Team-Building-See-Run-Do-2688825>

***Team Tic-Tac-Toe*** is a great to energize any group. Divide into teams and have each team plays tic-tac-toe against the other. <https://youtu.be/IRDp5HcZyVA>

**II. Creating Cultures of Leadership** from Drew Dudley, Founder, Day One Leadership, Author of [Lollipop Moments](#)

**The Leadership Game** provides a framework for decision-making. When presented with a situation where one is unsure of what to do, ask, “what would the person I want to be do” then do exactly that. This is easy enough unless there is uncertainty in terms of who we want to be.

Provide student leaders with situations they might encounter during the year that would require difficult decision-making. One example might be that a friend of the leader has asked the leader to not report something that would get him in trouble—could be everything from reporting to rehearsals late or reporting a bullying situation. Ask student leaders to describe how they would respond and who they were emulating in forming that response. What values did they use in forming their response?

For those who are unsure of who they want to emulate, there are three (3) steps that can be taken to help make that determination:

1. Ask them to identify their three (3) fundamental values—those which they embody daily.
2. Have them define those values. In other words, ask them to describe how they would explain their identified values to someone else. This will provide a set of criteria that can be used to help them make decisions that are consistent with their values. It is vital to be able to define those values that define us.
3. Have them work toward creating opportunities to live those values each day. Ask student leaders to list what they might do to create these situations.

**The Daily Leadership Game** is what guides Dudley's reason d'être. Each day, he asks himself the following six (6) questions:

1. What have I done today to recognize someone else's leadership? That embodies the value of impact.
2. What have I done to make it more likely that I will learn something? Embodies the value of continuous improvement.
3. That someone else will learn something to embody the value of mentorship? We all have something to teach others that will make their lives better.
4. What positive thing have I said to someone's face today? It's empowering.
5. What positive things have I said about someone who is not even in the room today. Embodies recognition. People we admire don't speak poorly about others
6. How have I been good to myself today? Embodies self-respect.

Four (4) of the above add value to others while two (2) add value to himself.

Dudley asks his workshop attendees to remember that "good leaders live their values every time a situation presents itself but great leaders create opportunities to live those values. They take deliberate steps everyday to make sure that they live the values that they want to stand for."

**III. Developing Leadership from ANY Place Within the Group** from Fran Kick, Professional Speaker, Author, and Leadership Consultant/Coordinator for Music for All's Summer Symposium.

The **ABC Game** illustrates to all participants that they don't need a title or position to make things happen within the group. In an appropriately large enough space, ask all of the team members to form a circle with nothing in the center. Next, ask the team members to form a specific letter in the center without speaking a single word.

The idea of the game is to illustrate that in any organization or situation, there are those who make things happen, those who watch things happen and those who wonder what's happening. This game interactively illustrates that point for participants and challenges them to figure things out for themselves as they learn how to constructively take the initiative to:

- Pay attention and respond appropriately.
- Lead by example.
- Problem solve as individuals within a group and as a group.
- Demonstrate three different ways individuals respond within a group.
- Increase awareness individually and collectively as a group.

This game also illustrates the power that each participant has to help build a team to make something better. By paying attention, responding appropriately, and getting involved, all participants are, by default, leading. Everyone can step up to the plate to make things happen at the level where they are most comfortable.

<https://youtu.be/qag8yBxoCnw>

#### **IV. Line Games to Promote Communication** from Dr. Tim Lautzenheiser, Motivational Speaker, Attitude Concepts for Today, Bluffton, IN

LINE GAMES... aligning the group in single file in a given pattern.

1. Divide the group into two (2) teams. Each team chooses a captain who is given instructions (see below) to take back to their team members.
2. Once the captain knows the instructions, it becomes his or her task to complete the pattern in the shortest amount of time possible.
3. Both groups participate simultaneously in an effort to beat their competing team in completing the task.

Key instructions could be:

1. Align the group by height, shortest to tallest.
2. Align the group by color of eyes, lightest to darkest.
3. Align the group by age, youngest to oldest.
4. Align the group by the month of their birthday, January through December.  
(Other patterns can be invented: shoe size, length of hair, etc.)

The rules are:

- No one can speak during the game.
- The captain is not allowed to verbally share the instructions.

#### **V. A Competition to Motivate Excellence** from Travis Pardee, Director of Bands, Foothill High School, Henderson, NV

The **Blue Shoe Competition** is held annually at the end of Band Camp and is awarded to the section that demonstrates the highest level of achievement in marching/movement fundamentals. Each section performs a series of marching drill commands and a four-minute "band dance" comprised of box drills and dance fundamentals taught by staff members on the first few days of camp. One hour is allotted daily during the two-week band camp for student leaders to rehearse their sections on these fundamentals.

On the last day of camp, the sections perform the routines for each other with band alumni serving as the adjudicators. Winners are announced that night at the parent

demonstration show in the stadium with the winning section performing their routine for their friends and families. Additionally, their names appear for one year on the Blue Shoe Trophy displayed prominently in the band room. (*Stolen from my Alma Mater in Ponca City, OK.*)

**BONUS: Lollipop Moments.** Finally, students should take up Drew Dudley’s challenge to identify and express gratitude for “**lollipop moments**” as a class activity. They would write a “**Lollipop Letter**” to someone who has changed their lives for the better (alive or dead) and acknowledge what the person did and say thank you.